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Haverfordwest: an exemplar for the study of southern Welsh towns in the later Middle Ages[1]

One recent early-modern historian has gone so far as to say that, 'To speak of urban history in Wales before the nineteenth century is perhaps to misuse the term'.[2] This dominant perspective of pre-industrial Wales as being overwhelmingly rural reflects both the general paucity of research into medieval Welsh towns, and the comparative lack of familiar documentation for their study. Important collections of studies and gazetteers of Welsh medieval towns, and useful archaeological works, are available,[3] although there has been a tendency - conditioned by the sources - to emphasize the topographical and

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[1] I wish to thank Ralph Griffiths for sharing his insights into medieval Welsh towns with me, and for substantially improving the style of this text. I am also grateful to Christopher Dyer for his helpful comments regarding population estimates for England and Wales.

[2] P. Jenkins, 'Wales', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume II, 1540-1840*, ed. P. Clark (Cambridge, 2000), 134.

[3] See especially, R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, 1978); R. A. Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud, 1994); and his, 'Wales and the Marches', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume I, 600-1540* , ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), 681-714; I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983); M. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Gloucester, 1988); P. Courtenay, *Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff, 1994); see also the useful survey in M. Griffiths, ' "Very wealthy by merchandise"? Urban fortunes', in *Class, Community and Culture in Tudor Wales*, ed. J. Gwynfor Jones (Cardiff, 1989), 197-235.

political at the expense of the social and economic. To say this is not to undermine the work already done, but to make the case for building upon it.

This present social and economic study of Haverfordwest is intended as an exemplar with a view to developing our knowledge of other towns of southern Wales, and thereby to contribute to a broader synthesis. Southern Wales is a useful unit of analysis because it is a distinct region in terms of both its urban evolution and its geographical imperatives. Unlike the towns in northern Wales that were, along with those in Gascony, France, largely the product of Edward I's invasions in the 1280s, those in the south were founded much earlier during the incursions of the Anglo-Norman lords following the conquest of England. The southern towns were founded particularly on the fertile coastal plains, with the Welsh uplands to the north and, to the south, the Severn estuary, with its extensive opportunities for inland, coastal and overseas trade. Haverfordwest has been chosen as an exemplar partly because of good formative work on topography and lordship,[4] and particularly because of the unusual survival of over 700 property deeds and other related sources for the town and townspeople between c. 1270 and 1550.[5] These sources have two main forms: first, grants of property between individuals, married couples or groups; and second, 'final concords' or arbitrations over disputed property rights, usually between married couples. Both forms provide evidence of the properties involved in varying amounts of detail, and sometimes the occupation and origin of the parties and other individuals involved. The grants record a number of witnesses to the transaction, and the arbitrations record the town officials, namely the

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[4] T. A. James, 'Haverfordwest', in *Pembrokeshire County History, Volume II: Medieval Pembrokeshire*, ed. R. F. Walker (2002), 430-60; D. Miles (ed.), *A History of the Town and County of Haverfordwest* (Llandysul, 1999); and see the introduction to B. G. Charles (ed.), *Calendar of the Records of the Borough of Haverfordwest, 1539-1660,* Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Series (hereafter BCS), no. 24 (Cardiff, 1967).

[5] The vast majority are in Haverfordwest Record Office (HRO), and accessible in, *A Schedule of Haverfordwest Records*, compiled by B. G. Charles (The National Library of Wales, hereafter NLW, 1960); and in Public Record Office (PRO), E210.

steward, reeves and four or five jurors. The arbitrations are concentrated in the period before 1400, and the survival of deeds overall is greater before 1450 than later.[6] These records are complemented by ministers' accounts, royal records, charters, petitions, customs accounts, wills, subsidy lists and corporation records. Informed by the substantial historiography that is now being generated for the study of medieval towns in England and Wales,[7] questions and debates prompted by previous research on Welsh towns can be identified and hypotheses proposed relating to the following fundamental themes: urbanization and demography, urban self-government, urban function and social structure. The study is undertaken in a comparative spirit, particularly in relation to England, in order to provide insights into what was, or was not, distinctive about urbanism and commerce in Wales.

Urbanization and demography

The level of urbanization is defined as the ratio between the number of urban and rural inhabitants in a particular region or country, and not necessarily by the general size of towns there. In recent years, as a result of greater scrutiny of sources for the calculation of population in England, levels of tax evasion and administrative corruption, numbers of the poor, and suburban growth - all more characteristic of urban society than of rural - the population estimates for towns, and therefore of the level of urbanization, have been revised upwards to double the previous level: that is, up to a steady 20 per cent between 1300 and 1525.[8] Philip Jenkins has recently stated that the urban population in sixteenth-century Wales was 'barely 11 per cent', and yet it has also been suggested that 'almost a fifth' of the total Welsh population were town dwellers in the medieval period.[9] Leonard

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[6] See Table 2 for the chronological weighting of the deeds.

[7] See Palliser (ed.), in note 2 above.

[8] C. Dyer, 'How urbanized was medieval England', in *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe* (Ghent, 1995), 169-183

[9] Jenkins, 'Wales', 134; C. Dyer, 'Small towns, 1270-1540', in Palliser (ed.), 510.

Owen has produced figures for Pembrokeshire in the mid-sixteenth century derived from evidence in the lay subsidies and the Bishop's Census of 1563.[10] Using calculations for the towns of Haverfordwest, Tenby and Pembroke alone (the other small towns are concealed in general territorial assessments), the urban population of Pembrokeshire was 15 per cent. The real figure must therefore, for Pembrokeshire at least, have been nearer 20 per cent, and therefore similar to England's.

There is a strong tendency in Welsh studies (influenced by declining returns from customs, and aspects of lordship income such as market and fair tolls) to argue that the urban population, like that of the countryside, must have been severely affected by the Black Death, and then dealt a devastating blow by the Glyn Dŵr uprising which focused its energies on the towns. It has been suggested that Haverfordwest's population and prosperity peaked in the early fourteenth century. It then apparently suffered a particularly serious attack by the French, Glyn Dŵr's allies, in 1405, and, according to this analysis, was in serious decay from then onwards, with very little recovery before the 1470s. The ministers' accounts record that 127 burgages were in decay in 1474.[11] Some support for a downturn in the population in the fifteenth century, and a recovery by the early sixteenth century, is derived from an analysis of sublet rents as recorded in the deeds; these were subject to market pressures unlike the lordship's assize rents. This is a crude method, particularly because the recording of rents is erratic and unevenly spread chronologically. However, using the approximately 500 deeds from the Haverfordwest Schedule, if all the large rents of 20*s.* and above are excluded, the average sublet rent for a burgage was 7*s.* 7*d.* between *c.* 1270 and 1349, 7*s.* 2*d.* between 1350 and 1399, 5*s.* 8*d.* between 1400 and 1449, 5s. 5d. between 1450 and 1499, and then back to previous levels of 7*s.* 3*d.* between 1500 and 1549. There was also a greater number of rents above 20*s.* in the last period, presumably from new buildings and consolidations of old burgages.

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[10] L. Owen, 'The population of Wales in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society* (1959), 99-113.

[11] James, 'Haverfordwest', 452-3.

The serious decay of burgages by the 1470s is not disputed. What, however, *is* questionable is the chronology of decay and the cause of the recovery, with implications for the resilience of medieval urban society and commerce in Wales generally. To begin with, the analysis of urban decline based upon selective lordship revenues is problematic. There are serious reservations to be noted about the fullness of the sources themselves, but the declining revenues may obscure a real weakening or delegation of lordship control in this period.[12] To take the example of the Haverford lordship beer prise or tax: in 1391 it peaked at over £15, representing some 10,000 gallons from well over a thousand, separate, small-scale brewings, probably produced largely by alewives. It dropped to over £12 in 1404, over £8 in 1407, over £4 in 1452, and £1 in 1474.[13] Should it be assumed from this that the people of Haverfordwest had stopped drinking beer by the 1470s, despite increasing levels of production well after the Black Death? On the other hand, aside from accountancy corruption, we might suspect the development of other arrangements, such as larger units of production by prominent townspeople and exempt from the prise.[14]

An alternative analysis of the chronology of growth and decline takes into account the more than 20 per cent increase in burgage 'and other town rents' recorded in the ministers' accounts between 1327 (£18 0*s*. 7½*d*.) and 1377 (£22 3*s*. 7½*d*.).[15] As well as at Carmarthen, which as a centre of royal government was growing throughout the medieval period, this kind of increase in burgages after the Black Death can also be seen in Tenby and Swansea, and did not slow down until the mid-fifteenth century. An unusual record of the number of Brecon's burgesses reveals they increased in number from 86 to 121 between 1411 and 1443, as did the farm of the borough. Apart from Brecon - which

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[12] See, for example, G. Williams, *Recovery, Reorientation and Reformation: Wales, c. 1415-1642* (Oxford, 1987), 82.

[13] H. Owen (ed.), *A Calendar of the Public Records Relating to Pembrokeshire, vol. I: The Lordship, Castle and Town of Haverford*, *no. 7,* Cymmrodorion Record Series (London, 1911), 67, 92.

[14] See H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), 22.

[15] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 61-5, 85-8

seemed to be particularly subject to powerful Marcher lordship, having its liberties periodically suspended from 1340 - this apparent increase in population paradoxically coincided with a reduction in other aspects of lordship income, similar to the situation at Haverfordwest.[16] One is therefore emboldened to proceed in a more optimistic vein, asserting that evidence for an increase in population in these towns in a period of marked population downturn in the country as a whole is probably a better indicator of general prosperity than the record of market and toll revenue. Using a commonly recognized household multiplier of 4.75, the equivalent burgage total of 443.5 (based on a chief rent to the lord of 1*s.* per burgage) in Haverfordwest in 1377 would produce a population of approximately 2,100. Utilizing evidence revealing that the 127 burgages in decay in 1474 were split into 167 whole or part burgages,[17] and therefore arguably households, the number of households might justifiably be increased overall by 25 per cent, and therefore the population estimate to 2,625. This figure might be increased still further by taking into account the extra escheated rents of over £1 in 1327 and 1377, the thirty-nine friars in 1285, and the Augustinian canons in the priory. Also, the priory and convent of Haverfordwest owned properties in the town ('Prior's Row' and St Thomas's Hill), and in a suburb outside the walls known as 'Little Haverford'.[18] These were subject to the priory's officials and courts by the early thirteenth century at the latest, and would not, therefore, have been included in the seignorial assize rental. However, an estimate in excess of 2,700 people may be reduced by up to a third by taking into account the 'other town rents' included in the overall assize total of 1377: that is, those generated from the groups of semi-permanent traders and workers ('burgesses de vento' and 'chensers'), as

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[16] See the following studies in Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs*: R. A. Griffiths, 'Carmarthen', 152-7; R. F. Walker, 'Tenby', 311-13; W. R. B. Robinson, 'Swansea', 269-71; R. R. Davies, 'Brecon', 64-8; and the last's, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), 91-8.

[17] T. A. James, 'The origins and topography of medieval Haverford', in D. Miles (ed.), 32.

[18] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 63, 66-7; James, 'Haverfordwest', 449; S. Rees, 'The Augustinian Priory', in Miles (ed.), 72; for officials and courts see Glamorgan Record Office (GRO), CL/Deeds/I/3662; PRO/E118/1/33.

well as certain market stall rents.[19] But these familiar groups in Welsh towns should not be excluded so easily from population estimates, because they formed an important part of the urban function and culture. Moreover, there would have been a significant transient population of continental merchants, sailors, pilgrims,[20] marginalized poor, and substantial numbers of clergy, all of whom would have swelled inns, lodging houses, and the market and courts of the town.

A useful set of ministers' accounts for Haverford lordship from 1377 to 1501 provides evidence for the chronology of decay in the fifteenth century.[21] After 1377, the recorded rental value remained static. This is a documentary illusion, probably representing the optimum rental value. However, because the accountant often submitted the amount of the rental in decay, the level of decay can be traced over time (see Table 1).[22]

Table 1: recorded decay of Haverfordwest burgages

Date of account	Haverfordwest: recorded decay from

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[19] The rents lost from the burgesses de vento amounted to 2*s*. 6½*d*. in 1405 and 1408 when they left 'through fear of rebellion', and an alleged £5 in 1474 at the peak of decline: Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 87, 135.

[20] Two pilgrims (and a prophet) are recorded in the deeds in the 1320s and 1330s: HRO 739, 743, 1077. Haverfordwest's friary contained a miraculous taper, and the town was on the important pilgrimage route to St Davids and Ireland: James, 'Haverfordwest', 448-9.

[21] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 86-9; Badminton Collection of Manorial Records, vol. 6: Miscellaneous Counties (NLW, 1946), nos. 1565-6.

[22] This method can be questioned because of the potential for opportunistic accountants and their corporations exaggerating the amount of decay. However, the detail and care with which decayed or unoccupied tenements are recorded by street and holder in the account of 1474 offset the force of this criticism.

	optimum £22 3*s*. 7½*d*.
1377	No decay stated
1382	No decay stated
1383	5*s*. 10*d*.
1388	No decay stated
1391-3	6*s*. 10*d*.
1405	12*s*. 8*d*. (a)
1408	14*s*. 7*d*. (b)
1453	No decay stated
1456	20*s*.
1465-6	Rental farmed
1473	Rental farmed
1474	£6 7*s*. (c)
1475	No decay stated
1477	£4 14*s*. 3½*d*.
1478	£4 2*s*.
1479	£4 2*s*.
1481	£3 13*s*. 1½*d*.
1501	Rental farmed

(a) and (b) Include 2*s*. 6½*d*. due from burgesses de vento who left 'through fear of rebellion'.

(c) Plus another £5 rent due from burgesses de vento that could not be levied.

The evidence presented in Table 1 indicates, first, that either Haverfordwest was not significantly affected by the Glyn Dŵr uprising and the French attack, or it quickly recovered from them; secondly, that there was still no significant decay in Haverfordwest by the 1450s; thirdly, that decay seems to have seriously set in somewhere between 1456 and 1474 when the town also started to be farmed to the greater gentry such as one of the Percys, and possibly Sir Henry Wogan of Haverfordwest and nearby Boulston; and fourthly, that between 1474 and 1478, decay was steadily reduced by 35 per cent, and by over 40 per cent by 1481. Rather than representing a sudden spurt in immigration, this reduction appears to have resulted from the rapid accumulation of escheated burgages by gentry such as John Perrot in 1477.[23] The rapid take-up of these burgages also supports the thesis that burgage decay had been a relatively recent phenomenon. In short, like Tenby and Swansea, significant decay in Haverfordwest seems to have begun as late as the mid-fifteenth century, rather than as a direct result of the Black Death and the Glyn Dŵr revolt. For the cause of decay, therefore, other factors might be taken into account, such as the decline in trade experienced by the English towns between 1450 and 1470 following the loss of Gascony to the French in 1453, and the curtailing of the wine and cloth trades in which the Welsh ports were very much involved.

The Bishop's Census of 1563 records 315 households for Haverfordwest. Owen calculates from this figure a population for Haverfordwest of just under 1,500 people.[24] This should be seen as a minimum figure, because it might not take account of the poor - permanent and temporary - in the town, nor the larger number of servants per household due to the greater number of gentry and substantial houses in the town.[25] However, despite the substantial re-development of St Mary's church by the early sixteenth century, and a favourable anecdotal reference to prosperity (and therefore recovery) in 1577,

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[23] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 141.

[24] Owen, 'Population', 112.

[25] A substantial number of poor people in the town by the mid-sixteenth century is suggested in Margaret Gwilym's will, which in 1551 authorized ten pounds to be distributed to the poor by penny dole at her funeral: PRO, PROB11/38.

whether the population in 1600 was greater than it had been in 1300 or 1400 seems unlikely.[26]

Urban self-government

The benefits of liberties, such as the ability to dispose of property freely, market monopolies, judicial freedoms, extensive common lands and rights in woodland, all of which Haverfordwest possessed by the late thirteenth century, are taken for granted as being a positive advantage to townspeople. They were the basis for protracted struggles with seignorial authority, and explain why urban populations were often maintained or increased by recruits from the countryside. Welsh towns appear to have been comparatively well-blessed in this respect: the attractive liberties and extra-mural property, as well as opportunities for lucrative and influential office-holding in Marcher administration, would have encouraged non-Welsh migrants to risk taking part in the consolidation of the conquest of Wales.[27] The relationship between urban self-government and the fortunes of towns in the late medieval period, however, is an ambiguous one. It is apparent that self-government, particularly in its more mature stages, could be potentially damaging to the urban economy, as its exploitation by lordship was continued in a different form by oligarchies of merchants and gentry which could encourage migration, restrict enterprise, and deter investment and immigration, and this is

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[26] R. Scourfield, 'The Churches and the Chapels', in Miles (ed.), 87; H. Owen, 'A survey of the lordship of Haverford in 1577', in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1903), 46.

[27] R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), 328-337. Davies detects an unusually large agrarian content in the liberties of Marcher boroughs compared to towns in England: substantial access to food supplies was a necessity in hostile Welsh territory.

often regarded as a contributing factor in a protracted urban decline in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[28]

Nevertheless, Haverfordwest's charter of 1479 is regarded as 'the most important step' towards the town's recovery.[29] Haverfordwest and its precincts were henceforward to form a county, separate from the lordship of Haverford, and to be governed by a corporation of mayor, sheriff, bailiffs and burgesses. The mayor was to take over from the lord's steward, and the bailiffs from the lord's reeves. The mayor also acquired the new role of justice of the peace, and that of coroner, clerk of the market, and admiral of the town. The chief officials, including the mayor, were to be selected by the whole body of burgesses from a permanent common council composed of twenty-four burgesses, these being chosen by the mayor. Therefore, the ordinary burgesses had a certain prescriptive role in government. But having said this, they formed only a small minority of the townspeople: 140 in the 1280s (less than 7 per cent NB but multiply this for household]), and possibly as few as 100 in the late sixteenth century.[30]

Important steps towards autonomy were certainly taken in 1479. But the significance of this charter is qualified by two main considerations: first, any laws and statutes made by the town government required consent by means of a warrant from the crown, and the town was still subject to the crown's itinerant justices; secondly, there is

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[28] J. L. Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy, 1150-1500* (London, 1980), ch. 8; S. H. Rigby and E. Ewan, 'Government, power and authority 1300-1540', and R. H. Britnell. 'The economy of British towns 1300-1540', in Palliser (ed.), 309-12, 331-3.

[29] HRO, HAM/1 and 7; James, 'Haverfordwest', 453.

[30] W. Rees, *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), 366; Charles, *Calendar*, 4; P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, vol. I (London, 1981), 322-3. The early figure is derived from a petition complaining that all the burgesses of Haverfordwest, amounting to that number, were outlawed by the earl of Pembroke. The second and more problematic figure refers to the number of burgesses who qualified to vote in the election for Haverfordwest's MP in 1571-2, the attendance usually being much lower.

compelling evidence that much of what was granted simply confirmed existing practice. Developing the latter point, a clause in the 1479 charter refers to courts being held by the mayor *ab antiquo*, as of ancient usage. Haverfordwest's charter of 1291, itself ratifying what had 'formerly been the custom', enabled the burgesses to determine judicial matters within the town regarding trespass, and this possibly included pleas of debt and broken contracts between townspeople, a characteristic of a borough court.[31] It is likely that, as in Carmarthen and Cardigan (which received similar charters in 1257 and 1284 respectively), the townspeople were, by the early fourteenth century, setting the custom on weights and measures and the assize of bread and ale, and, like Swansea, were collecting and utilizing a common scot or local tax for the town's affairs.[32] Haverfordwest was granted a gild merchant between 1219 and 1229 – the first reference to a gild hall occurs when the deeds begin in the late thirteenth century – and it was in the gild merchant that, very early on, towns created structures of self-organization including elections to official posts.[33]

The right to possess a common seal was also granted in 1479, thereby enhancing the town's status in its business dealings with other corporations and powerful individuals. But it already had a seal, probably dating back to the 1291 charter.[34] It is seen in 1315 authenticating letters patent for the 'community of burgesses of Haverford[west]', granting use of a conduit to all the 'common people', and this underscores the differentiation of the burgesses as a distinct commonalty from the rest of

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[31] *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, vol. 2 (1257-1300), (London, HMSO, 1903-27), 406.

[32] Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs*, 158-9, 290, 279.

[33] For the gild merchant grant, see *Charter Rolls*, vol. 4 (1327-41), 228; for 'le ghildhus', see HRO, 951; J. Tait, *The Medieval English Borough* (Manchester, 1936), 225-6. A merchant gild for Pembrokeshire based in Pembroke existed earlier, however, with a charter dated 1154-89 granting that 'all merchants of the county of Pembroke may by the decision of the burgesses, enter the merchant gild': P. G. Sudbury, 'The medieval boroughs of Pembrokeshire' (unpublished M. A. thesis, Aberystwyth, 1947), 40.

[34] James, 'Haverfordwest', 450-1.

the population, and also shows that they had powers of authorization and authentication.[35] By this time, official differentiation *within* the burgess communities of both Haverfordwest and Cardigan into 'bailiffs, good men (*probi homines*) and commonalty' is indicated in a royal request for ships in 1311.[36] A governing corporation in Haverfordwest was acknowledged in 1317 in a receipt revealing that it had appointed six townsmen to collect £30 as a loan to the lord, and an indenture of 1611 states that before 1504 'Haverfordwest had from time immemorial been as an ancient town corporate', and not simply for the previous twenty-five years since 1479. The existence of craft fellowships in the town also illustrates the hidden nature of corporate practice in Haverfordwest, with implications for the situation elsewhere. The same indenture of 1611 states that before 1504 'good ordinances were made by the several fellowships of the several trades in the town', and a shoemaker's petition to the town council in 1499 reveals an organized craft containing thirteen master shoemakers with supervisors and searchers, and a corporate identity represented by a light in St Mary's church commemorating St. Peter.[37] By the early fourteenth century, then, governing institutions of some sophistication and autonomy were already in place, and this puts the impact of the 1479 charter into perspective.

Steve Rigby and Elizabeth Ewen have suggested that the ability of towns to own land was probably the most important factor granted by incorporation.[38] This ability is not stated in the Haverfordwest charter, but it is likely that the corporation proceeded to acquire properties in the name of the town in order to pursue its affairs, particularly after it farmed the borough rents and perquisites from 1500. Indeed, the conveyance of 'chamberlain's lands' is revealed in deeds of 1541, 1545 and 1545-6, with the mayor and

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[35] HRO, 988.

[36] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 10.

[37] HRO, 878; GRO, CL/Deeds/I/3707, 3741.

[38] S. Rigby and E. Ewen, 'Government, Power and Authority, 1300-1540', in Palliser (ed.), 299.

members of the common council acting collectively as feoffees or grantors.[39] There is also, however, evidence of corporate involvement in property from the early fifteenth century in relation to parish institutions in the town. In 1418 an elite group of previous stewards and reeves, merchants and gentry, described as 'parishioners of the church of St Mary of Haverfordwest, on behalf of the other parishioners', appointed two churchwardens. A few years earlier, a similar group passed on property, and other groups, made up of twelve members - this number is indicative of medieval government administration - are found doing the same throughout the fifteenth century, often with the involvement of the churchwardens and clergy. Moreover, a bond of 1534 shows a group acting as feoffees of St Mary's being involved in a dispute over property.[40] There are indications here of strong secular control of church property, and the organization of parish finances by leading townsmen, much of which would have been bequeathed to the possession of the churchwardens through wills and other grants.[41]

It has been suggested that compared to the inherent conflict over liberties in English towns, the towns of Wales were characterized by co-operation between lords and townspeople, a possible result of their common English origins and mutual dependence in hostile territory.[42] This seems largely a hypothesis from silence in the urban record, but if applied before the mid-fifteenth century when the towns - including the large border towns – were becoming increasingly cymricized, it carries some weight and should be investigated further, together with the relationship between the urban elite and the rest of the townspeople. In Haverfordwest's case, there is more than an indication of a situation similar to that in England. Two petitions to the crown dated between 1282 and 1290

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[39] HRO, 910, 901, 942, 982. For the general experience and implications of this development, see R. Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540-1640* (Oxford, 1998), 57-136.

[40] HRO, 1000, 979, 1377.

[41] For the development of these institutions in fifteenth-century England, see B. A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c. 1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996).

[42] Rigby and Ewen, 'Government, Power and Authority', 298; Davies, *Lordship*, 321-2.

allege that the 140 burgesses were outlawed *en masse*, imprisoned, excessively fined in court, and had goods (allegedly worth £500) taken by the earl of Pembroke, because they continued, eventually successfully, to assert their right to be tried only in their town court at Haverfordwest rather than in the earl's court at Pembroke.[43] Moreover, 'the men and burgesses' of Haverfordwest committed 'rebellions, insurrections, felonies and misprisions' against Sir Roland Leynthale and his servants, on 1, 2 and 3 May, 1415. Leynthale, a royal servant, was lord of Haverfordwest for much of the first half of the fifteenth century. These days marked the beginning, not only of May celebrations with their dramas and rituals, but of Haverfordwest's seven-day fair.[44] The timing of the insurrection is suggestive, and points to it being planned in advance. The beginning of the fair would have provided an opportunity for a large gathering without drawing suspicion, but the extension of the conflict over three days gives the impression of a desperate situation between the lord and the townspeople. The latter received the crown's pardon in 1417, a further measure of the seriousness of the conflict. If women did not take part in the latter troubles, it was not because they were averse to conflict: in 1405-6, for example, Joan Picton was at the head of 'a great discord between the people there', during her appeal against Sir Henry Wogan 'and others'.[45]

Urban function

Population, institutional role, occupational specialization and diversity, and hinterland largely determine urban function in the medieval period. With 2,000 people loosely regarded as being the upper limit for a 'small medieval town', the population of

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[43] Rees, *Ancient Petitions*, 88, 366.

[44] *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1416-22*, 62; Sudbury, 'Medieval boroughs', 156.

[45] E. A. Lewis, 'A contribution to the commercial history of medieval Wales', *Y Cymmrodor*, 24 (1913), 159.

Haverfordwest would arguably place it in a higher category, particularly in a country with a relatively low population density. This has implications for its social and economic role, the higher order towns typically acting as markets for a greater range and quantity of manufactures, and as distribution points for overseas trade, compared to the lower order towns that typically acted as collection points for local food to be distributed up the urban hierarchy.[46] To support this conclusion, its institutional role as a military, judicial and administrative (or castle-based) centre of the major Marcher lordship of Haverford can be cited; it also had a priory and convent, three parish churches, a grammar school, various chapels and holy wells, and a friary – the latter in particular being seen as 'an emblem' of a larger town.[47] What follows is an analysis of the town's hinterland, the range and focus of its occupations, and changes in its economy.

The geographical origins of debtors, particularly those recorded in borough court records, provide a useful means of determining a town's hinterland. The records are limited in Wales, and do not survive for Pembrokeshire. However, the origins of those involved in Haverfordwest deeds are often stated, and surnames before the mid-fourteenth century can also be indicative of origin. Mapping these gives an indirect indication of a commercial hinterland by pointing to the range of origins from which Haverfordwest was able to attract migrants and investors. The deeds reveal a density and geographical breadth of origins in the boroughs and rural settlements throughout Pembrokeshire, and therefore suggest a broad sphere of influence in that county as a centre for exchange and administration. This influence was clearly facilitated by Haverfordwest's central location in the county, and also its easy access to overseas trade through its own inland port, and its associated harbour at Milford. Many of the rural settlements were nearby, and it is within this local sphere that Haverfordwest would

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[46] C. Dyer, 'Trade, urban hinterlands and market integration, 1300-1600: a summing up', in J. A. Galloway, (ed.), *Trade, Hinterlands and Market Integration, c. 1300-1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series No. 3 (London, 2000), 103.

[47] James, 'Haverfordwest', 435, 499; *Episcopal Registers of St Davids* (Cymmrodorion series, no 6, vol. 3, 1917), 525; C. Dyer, 'Small towns', 531.

expect to derive most of its food supply in normal times.[48] The town's influence also stretched over the county border to the boroughs of Laugharne, Kidwelly and Carmarthen to the east, and north-west to Cardigan. Further afield, the connections were with south-west England (Bristol, Bridgwater and North or South Petherton in Somerset, Exeter and Tiverton in Devon, and Cornwall), rather than the Welsh uplands to the north and north-east. The involvement in the deeds of Hugh le Fleming (1288-1332), and Henry Thomas, 'Duchissman' (1436),[49] betrays links to the Low Countries, and the pre-1348 surname analysis reveals an array of names of French and Flemish origin, though some of these could have stemmed from early settlers.

This crude impression in the deeds of an overseas hinterland in France and the Low Countries is supported and improved by evidence in royal records and customs accounts. These and other sources reveal a substantial trade between the port and the continent, exchanging hides, wool, and later probably cloth, for wine. The trade between Haverfordwest and Bordeaux can be traced back at least to 1228, when a Haverfordwest merchant's ship was arrested on the way home carrying wines from Bordeaux.[50] In 1282, Edward I's Italian bankers paid £217 for wine at Haverfordwest, suggesting that it was a significant source of supply.[51] In 1315, on a voyage to Gascony, fourteen merchants from the town alleged that £400 worth of their merchandise was carried off by armed force when their ship was blown towards Spain, and in a petition a decade later, another five claimed that they had 'freighted ships with wines at different times from Bordeaux to Haverford[west]'.[52] Another petition to the crown, dated around 1453, reveals the problems faced by Haverfordwest merchants as a result of the loss of Gascony, two of them stating:

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[48] Dyer, 'A summing up', 103.

[49] HRO 1204, 923.

[50] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 145

[51] James, 'Haverfordwest', 450.

[52] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 149-50; Rees, *Ancient Petitions*, 56.

> They were at Bordeaux with their merchandise at the time of the last vintage and were there
> abiding, for lack of ships, until the time of the capture of the city by the king's enemy. After that
> event they obtained safe-conduct to return home and to trade with Bordeaux again within three-
> quarters of a year with one or two ships of the total tonnage of 160 tons and with six merchants
> and 50 mariners. They pray that the King grant his licence for the voyage.[53]

Wine shipped in Haverfordwest and continental ships is recorded in ministers' accounts for Haverford and Milford in the years 1392-4, 1405-6, 1452-3 and 1500-1.[54] Some of it was taken to the castle at Haverfordwest, the rest sold direct to prominent burgesses, and to women such as Rose Skedy who bought two tuns of Spanish and Gascony wine in 1452-3. In the first of these accounts, Thomas Gower is recorded shipping twelve tuns of wine from Haverfordwest to Ireland, and this is indicative of further distribution of wine upon its arrival at the port.

Haverfordwest was not the only Welsh port involved in the lucrative wine trade. In 1330 a petition by the burgesses of Carmarthen blamed a new custom for the lack of wine-laden ships arriving there, while they went to 'Haverford[west], Pembroke, Tenby and Swansea and everywhere thereabouts'.[55] The constable's accounts of Bordeaux record ships from Chepstow, Tenby and Milford, and the Bristol customs accounts from the late fifteenth century show that significant cargoes of wine were shipped from the

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[53] Rees, *ibid.*, 47.

[54] Lewis, 'Contribution', 158-163.

[55] Rees, *Ancient Petitions*, 79.

Welsh ports, especially from Chepstow, to Bristol – rather than vice-versa.[56] Medieval southern Wales is often characterized by the relative lack of commercial maturity of its urban system, and its dependence on Bristol in particular, the Severnside regional centre.[57] But while intimate cultural and commercial connections between the southern Welsh towns and Bristol were clearly significant,[58] on the basis of this evidence the level of their economic dependence on Bristol merits reassessment.

[56] E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'The overseas trade of Bristol' in E. Power and M. M. Postan (eds.), *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth* Century' (1933), 205. For the Bristol accounts, see PRO, E122/20/5, 9; E122/21/1, 4, 5, 7, 10. The Bristol accounts record a sharp increase in the numbers of Welsh ships trading with Bristol from 1485, peaking in the 1520s. Generally, raw materials including large ship-loads of wine and fish, but also hides, fruit, resin, oil, sugar, canvas, soap and tallow, were delivered to Bristol in Welsh boats from Welsh ports, and it is diverse manufactured commodities, especially cloth from Bristol, Manchester and Dunster in Somerset, but also herbs, wheat and malt, that left Bristol in Welsh ships, usually to Ireland and the continent (when the destination is stated). It should be noted, however, that because of customs exemptions in their charters, the recording of ships from the majority of Welsh ports, including Haverfordwest, is rare in these accounts, thereby making a statistical analysis problematic.

[57] For example, see Jenkins, 'Wales', 137; and Courtney, *Usk*, 111-37; Dyer, 'Summing up', 105-6.

[58] R. A. Griffiths, 'Medieval Severnside: the Welsh connection', in his *Conquerors and Conquered*, 1-18. Note also that Monmouthshire, Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire alone provided 14 per cent of the total apprentices to Bristol from southern Wales, predominantly from towns, between 1532 and 1552, not including those from Bristol itself. This compares with 17 per cent from the south-western counties of Somerset, Wiltshire and Devon, and 27 per cent for the west midlands counties of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire. Gloucestershire and Somerset alone provided 30 per cent, but this figure includes many apprentices from Bristol suburbs such as Bedminster and Horfield adjacent to the old town making the Welsh contribution even more striking: D. Hollis (ed.), *Calendar of Bristol Apprentice Book, 1532-1563, Part 1: 1532-1542*, Bristol Record Society (BRS) (Bristol, 1949); E. Ralph and N. Hardwick (eds.), *Calendar of Bristol Apprentice Book, 1532-1563, Part II: 1542-1552,* BRS, vol. 33 (Bristol, 1980).

Before the late fourteenth century, Haverfordwest merchants exported wool and hides, and after the staple moved from Haverfordwest to Carmarthen in 1353, the accounts for Carmarthen record four Haverfordwest merchants exporting these commodities to Gascony and England. Two of them alone in July 1357 shipped 282 sacks of wool and 3,300 hides to England, attracting a custom of over £105; another group exported a larger consignment in July 1360.[59] Bristol had virtually ceased to export wool in 1363, reverting to broadcloths a decade earlier.[60] Very little wool seems to have been shipped by Haverfordwest merchants through the Carmarthen staple after 1360, and because in 1394 seven Haverfordwest merchants complained that their ship laden in the important textile manufacturing and distribution region of Flanders with goods and merchandise to an alleged value of £1,000 was wrecked on the Cornish coast, there is some reason to believe that Haverfordwest was now shipping relatively cheap cloth there in return for high quality mercery and haberdashery, and other manufactured goods.[61] Haverfordwest may therefore have taken part in the flourishing 'English' cloth industry in the late fourteenth century and the apparent increase in population in the town between 1327 and 1377 may be attributed to this - despite the marked population downturn in the country generally - a phenomenon familiar in English towns such as Coventry and Colchester. Investment in two new fulling mills in 1477, one in Haverfordwest and the other in nearby Camrose, suggests that Haverfordwest may have taken part in the resurgence of the cloth industry and trade by this time, following the mid-century slump, and one might expect this to be the case in view of its large quota of merchants and mercers, its full range of cloth trades (see Table 2), and its strong links with the continent. The well-known Haverfordwest ordinance of 1557, and Henry Owen's 'description' of Pembrokeshire in 1603, also argue for a substantial cloth industry at Haverfordwest before the mid-sixteenth century. Both lament its replacement by the production of wool and later corn, the ordinance describing the making of friezes and 'fullclothes' as

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[59] Lewis, 'Contribution', 138, 141.

[60] E. M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages*, BRS vol. 7 (Bristol, 1937) 293.

[61] *Ibid*., 142-7; Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 154. Bolton, *Medieval English Economy*, 287.

formerly 'a great commodity to the common wealth of the town but also to the inhabitants in times past [that] have had their living thereby'. Owen complained that 'thousands' were previously maintained by the industry in Pembrokeshire, and he blamed enclosures for the de-skilling and pastoralization of the youth there.[62]

In analysing Haverfordwest's occupational specialization and diversity, Table 2 represents the number and range of particular occupations of those people involved in the Haverfordwest deed materials, whether as grantors, grantees, jurors, officials or witnesses to disputes over rights to property, or as tenants adjacent to the property in question.

TABLE 2[63]

Period	1270-1349	1350-1449	1450-1549	1550-1599
No. of deeds	24 per decade	28 per decade	20 per decade	15 per decade
Agrarian	2 drovers	2 knights	1 knight	1 knight
		2 esquires	13 esquires	2 esquires
		1 gentleman	17 gentlemen	14 gentlemen
			3 gentlemen/merchants	1 merchant/
			4 yeomen	esquire
			1 yeoman/shearman	2 merchants/
			2 husbandmen	gentlemen

[62] Charles, *Calendar*, 29; G. Owen (ed.), *The Description of Penbrokeshire* by George Owen of Henllys (London, 1892), 146-8; for the chronology of change to wool and lamb fells, see the introduction in E. A. Lewis (ed.), *Welsh Port Books 1550-1603* (1927); for widespread enclosure by 1600, see B. E. Howells, 'Studies in the social and agrarian history of medieval and early modern Pembrokeshire' (unpublished M.A. thesis, Aberystwyth, 1956), 80-8.

[63] The figures are based upon the first reference to a particular person and his or her occupation.

				3 yeomen 2 husbandmen
Mercantile	1 mercer 1 spicer 1 furrier 4 skinners	18 merchants 1 merchant/chapman 1 skinner	39 merchants and mercers 3 gentlemen/merchants 1 draper/merchant 1 goldsmith/merchant 1 goldsmith	12 merchants and mercers 1 merchant/ esquire 2 merchants/ gentlemen
Clergy	13 clerks/ chaplains	38 clerks/chaplains	12 clerks/chaplains	1 clerk
Cloth Crafts	7 tailors 8 dyers 4 weavers	6 tailors 4 weavers 2 cardmakers 1 fuller	8 tailors 6 weavers 5 friezers 4 cardmakers 3 tuckers 1 tucker/friezer 1 shearman 1 yeoman/shearman 2 dyers	4 tuckers 3 cardmakers 2 shearmen 1 capper 1 weaver
Leather Crafts		2 shoemakers 2 'leather-workers'	19 shoemakers 2 shoemakers/'leather dressers'	3 glovers 3 shoemakers

		1 glover	6 tanners	1 tanner
		1 saddler	1 glover	
			1 currier	
			1 saddler	
Victuallers	3 millers	1 baker	5 bakers	
	3 meat stall holders	1 cook	1 miller	
	1 baker		1 cook	
	1 cook			
Building Crafts and Misc.	5 smiths	1 mason	5 carpenters	1 carpenter
	2 soap makers	1 painter	5 barbers	1 pewterer
	2 potters		3 tilers	1 tiler
	2 masons		2 smiths	1 pointmaker
	2 'portmen'		1 mason	
	1 carter		1 joiner	
	1 painter		1 bowyer	
	1 barber		1 glazier	
	1 collier		1 purser	
	1 hooper			
	1 fisherman			
	'le seler'			

Small towns are known to have contained up to forty non-agrarian occupations, although the majority of small market towns probably had little more than twenty.[64] From the chance survival of deeds alone, over forty trades can be counted for Haverfordwest before 1549. From other sources we can add sailors (recorded in 1300 and 1453); a plumber (1326); stonecutters, carpenters, quarriers, and an armourer (1403); and a thatcher (1474),[65] bringing known occupations in the 1450-1549 period to thirty-one, and in the absence of more familiar and revealing sources for this exercise such as borough court records. From the deed materials for the second half of the sixteenth century, a capper, a vintner, whittawers and feltmakers can also be included. This reinforces evidence for Haverfordwest's function being extensive and well beyond that of a typical small town.

However, Table 2 is as much a representation of wealth and the domination of the property market as it is of the occupational make-up of the town. The people to whom these occupations were attached were generally from the more wealthy crafts and trades, entering the property market not simply to obtain a dwelling, but to speculate as rentiers.[66] There are also certain anomalies. The first is the remarkable number of clergy appearing in the deeds after the Black Death, though steadily disappearing thereafter. The reason for this is not clear, but it has been demonstrated that they acted as intermediaries for patrons in Haverfordwest, and they were probably involved in parish-related transactions.[67] They are, therefore, indicative of a vigorous property market following the Black Death, in the period for which we have the greatest number of surviving deeds. Of

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[64] Dyer, 'Small towns', 513; and his *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain, 850-1520* (Newhaven and London, 2002), 202.

[65] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 24, 65, 138, 164, 169.

[66] M. M. Postan, *Medieval Trade and Finance* (Cambridge, 1973), 14-15.

[67] R. K. Turvey, 'The Perrots and their circle in south-west Wales during the later middle ages' (unpublished University of Wales, Swansea, Ph.D. thesis, 1988), 353-6

forty-eight clerks and chaplains involved in the deeds between 1351 and the early sixteenth century, there is evidence in the episcopal registers of St David's for at least sixteen of them, bearing in mind the registers cover only 1397 to 1410, and from 1486 to 1515.[68] Fourteen of these held one or more vicarage, rectory or chapel in Pembrokeshire, and at least one was vicar of St Mary's in Haverfordwest. The second anomaly is the absence of merchants from the early record, eighteen of the nineteen merchants recorded between 1350 and 1449 appearing after 1420. Yet the royal records and customs accounts record twenty-two Haverfordwest merchants involved in substantial overseas trade in the space of fifteen years in the early fourteenth century, and at least twenty-five are recorded between 1357 and 1404.[69] The validity of Table 2 as an indication of economic change is therefore circumscribed.

However, the findings may be approached from another direction. The ostensible increase in the number and range of cloth trades between 1450 and 1549 seems, at first, to represent an expanding cloth industry, particularly considering the drop in the number of surviving deeds in this period. However, this increase in recorded trades applies to all industries and status groups, with the exception of clergy and victuallers. It is likely, therefore, that the increase in the recording of occupations in the deeds was the result of changing administrative practice: new controls implemented by a more autonomous government and emerging craft guilds.[70] The assertion of autonomy in government is reflected in the insurrection in 1415 and churchwarden appointments in 1418; as for the guilds, the shoemakers requested controls on skills levels and restrictions on entry to their craft in 1499, and the other guilds produced ordinances before 1504 as well. It is difficult, otherwise, to explain the sudden recording in the deeds of merchants and gentry after 1420, and the jump from two to twenty-one shoemakers after 1450. If one pursues this hypothesis of occupational naming by the mid-fifteenth century, the findings become

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[68] *Episcopal Registers, passim.*

[69] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 25, 149-50, 154; Lewis, 'Contribution', 138-41, 154-5; Rees, *Ancient Petitions,* 56.

[70] See note 26 above.

more valid as an indication of economic change in the subsequent period. After 1550, the significant reduction in the recorded numbers and range of crafts and even of merchants in the deeds, on the one hand, and the continuity of large numbers of gentry, on the other (adding nine more esquires and gentry from outside the town), despite a narrowing of the source-base, is strongly indicative of growing dominance by the gentry in the town after 1550, even though they had been present long before. This supports other evidence for an increasing change from industrial manufacture to the production of raw materials in Pembrokeshire in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Social Structure

A commonly deployed method of analysing social structure is to construct a hierarchy of social layers based on levels of income.[71] This is helpful, but social structure must necessarily be seen as a dynamic historical relationship between dominant and subordinate groups or classes, and this relationship can be identified by cross-referencing evidence for wealth, occupations and office-holding.

While craftsmen could form the elite of small towns, they rarely did so in the larger towns, usually overlapping in wealth and status with the lower end of the mercantile class.[72] Rodney Hilton has argued that merchants, as both consumers and middle-men, were interested in limiting the scope of craft activities, and they used their

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[71] For a useful analysis of the 1543 lay subsidies for Swansea and Cardiff, with implications for Haverfordwest, see M. Griffiths, 'Urban fortunes', 207-12.

[72] C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England, c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989), 195. R. H. Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society* (Cambridge, 1992), 56.

positions in the gild merchant, and later through corporate government, to do so.[73] With the gild merchant, the strong overseas commercial function of Haverfordwest, and the early proliferation of the mercantile element, one might expect merchants to be among the wealthiest groups in Haverfordwest and to dominate its government. This hypothesis can be tested by analysing two occupational and official lists.

The first list is of eighteen merchants exporting overseas between 1315 and 1321.[74] The evidence points to them having a strong hold on government office because, despite the incomplete nature of the deed materials, it reveals at least eight of the eighteen to be reeves (that is, chief officers in the town, beneath the lord's steward) at least once, and a minimum of another five acted as jurors in the lord's internal town court. The descendants of some of these merchants are identified as having significant landed interests by the end of the fourteenth century, thereby revealing a landed interest in power. John Picton, who exported wool and hides in 1357 and 1360, bequeathed a substantial fortune in Pembrokeshire property to his daughter Alice, and she went on to marry Sir Thomas Perrot in 1422. Thomas Sturmin was also suitable for marriage into the nearby gentry house of Haroldston by 1400.[75] However, two clerks, a weaver, a painter, a dyer, and possibly even a collier, also filled the reeveship around 1300, revealing a measure of craft and other involvement in power structures at an early period.

The second list is of twenty-four common councillors who were present in formal assembly in 1539.[76] One is described as mayor, and the others include one esquire, five gentlemen, eight mercers (these were wealthy merchants), two shoemakers, a tailor, a friezer, a shearman, a tanner, and a glover. Of the remaining two, the deeds show that

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[73] *Ibid*., 70-6. See also Swanson, *Medieval* Artisans, 149.

[74] Owen, *Pembrokeshire Records*, 149-50; Lewis, 'Contribution', 154-5.

[75] Lewis, 'Contribution', 138, 141; Turvey, 'Perrots', 71, 420; and see also R. Turvey, 'The Gentry' in Walker (ed.), for numerous Haverfordwest burgesses holding knight's fees in the early fourteenth century. Davies reveals the same phenomenon in 'Brecon', 49.

[76] Charles, *Calendar*, 19.

one, Henry ap Rhydderch, was a tailor. The town government was therefore shared at this time among the gentry, merchants and craftsmen. It is probable, however, that these craftsmen in government were themselves mercantile and leading officials in their craft associations.[77] Yet despite representation on the common council, they seem to have been marginalized from the core administration. For example, the feoffees responsible for the chamberlain's lands in the 1540s were, without exception, gentry, mercers or merchants, and so were the MPs for the town in the 1540s and 1550s when the town began to represented in parliament for the first time.[78]

The shoemaker's petition of 1499 is also illustrative of social structure with regard to the political and economic relationship between gentry and merchants on the one hand and crafts on the other. The 'worshipful' officials (that is, the mayor, two bailiffs and two sergeants) to whom the petition was presented were all merchants or gentry, and they all had some involvement in the deeds. The involvement of John Sutton, merchant, John Harry, merchant, and John Richard, gentleman, was extensive and they often acted collectively.[79] To give an indication of their wealth, Sutton's will of 1551 reveals that he owned land and property in many parts of Pembrokeshire, including the leases of three parsonages.[80] The same year, Lewis Einion, gentleman of Haverfordwest, granted property in twenty-eight different places in ten parishes throughout

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[77] Four shoemakers, two glovers and a tanner from Haverfordwest shipped hides and other wares to and from Bristol in the second half of the sixteenth century: Lewis, (ed.), *Welsh Port Books*, 68, 137, 154-9

[78] Hasler, *The House of Commons*, *1558-1603*, 322; S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509-1558, vol. I* (London, 1982), 280-1; and *vol. II*, 453-4. The most prestigious MP on the 1539 list of Haverfordwest councillors was Thomas Johnes or Jones, esquire, and later knight. He was lessee of numerous lordships, castles and manors which formed part of the inheritance of his son-in-law John Perrot. He also performed the following offices: sheriff of the counties of Cardigan, Carmarthen and Pembroke between 1540 and 1544, justice of the peace in Carmarthenshire and four English counties, and MP of Pembrokeshire in 1542 and 1547.

[79] For example: HRO, 895.

[80] PRO, PROB11/34.

Pembrokeshire. The following year, Einion's grantee, Gruffydd Whyte of Hentland, was involved in a legal case with respect to numerous grain and fulling mills, fifty-five messuages, 200 gardens and 9,040 acres of land, and yet only half the places from the previous grant were stated (although significantly in the same order).[81] John Richards had a partnership with John Floyde of Tenby, and, acting as defendants at Westminster in 1532-3 against a London merchant tailor, both were accused of withholding deeds relating to eleven messuages and 500 acres of land in Tenby and Haverfordwest.[82] Of the shoemakers listed in the 1499 petition, the three supervisors and searchers of the craft are also recorded in the deeds, one acquiring a substantial burgage at 20*s*. rent in Market Street, and another granting a close worth 16*s*. of rent. Of the ten masters, there is evidence for three in the deeds, one a grantee of half a burgage, and one of a whole burgage, the rents not being stated. The third, Thomas John, is possibly the man described as bailiff in 1507 and involved in a collective conveyance in 1512 with John Richard, John Harry and others on the common council, although the bailiff and conveyancer could also be Thomas Johnes, esquire, a common councillor in 1539.[83] For the majority of shoemakers in 1499, nothing is recorded, and this indicates a relatively marginal status in the town. It is clear, however, that those designated as shoemakers, at least, could become leading men in the town, as landholders or through their mercantile activities. Nicholas Hore, described as shoemaker on the common council in 1539, is described as a merchant in 1547, and he was clearly the wealthiest person in Haverfordwest in a list of forty-six contributing to a subsidy.[84] William Laurence, shoemaker, accumulated fourteen burgages in the 1440s and 1450s in the town, and appears to have done so in association with William Perrot, gentleman, for whom he was

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[81] Carmarthenshire Record Office, Lort Muniments, 20/759, 22/895.

[82] E. A. Lewis (ed.), *An Inventory of Early Chancery Proceedings Concerning Wales* (Cardiff, 1937), 64.

[83] HRO, 1014, 1114, 813, 895; PRO, E210/1109. For Thomas Johnes, esquire, see note 78 above.

[84] PRO, E179/223/468. It should be noted, however, that some of the leading gentry would not have been included on this list as they lived outside the town precincts in their country houses and yet were still allowed entry into the freedom of the town as burgesses.

also a feoffee of rural property.[85] Furthermore, the churchwardens of St Mary's were increasingly handicraftsmen in the fifteenth century, and crafts no doubt exerted influence through other channels such as the church and their fellowships.[86] So, while it is difficult to find craftsmen in government for much of the medieval period in the largest provincial towns in England, in a medium-sized town like Haverfordwest in southern Wales things were more complex. Having said that, Haverfordwest's government became more distinctly gentrified in the later sixteenth century, particularly when some of the more substantial county gentry such as the Perrots entered it, a phenomenon also observed in Carmarthen.[87]

Conclusion

These findings for Haverfordwest begin to alter impressions of towns in pre-industrial southern Wales. There was a flourishing urban and commercial culture by the late thirteenth-century, with resilience in many places and in some cases further development despite the fourteenth-century context of crisis.

Given the close economic relationship between southern Wales and the border towns (notably Hereford, Gloucester and Bristol), and the numerous, integrated Welsh populations in these latter towns by the early sixteenth century, to draw rigid boundaries

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[85] PRO, E210; Turvey, 'Perrots', 349-50.

[86] HRO, 1000, 1882, 845, 1145, 1068.

[87] Griffiths, 'Carmarthen', 160-3.

between Wales and England seems somewhat misleading.[88] However, many of the southern Welsh towns enjoyed a noticeable measure of autonomy from England in the late Middle Ages, with a substantial commerce direct with the continent, and as centres of supply and redistribution of certain commodities, notably wine. In the absence of borough court records, only a poor understanding of relationships between towns or of urban hierarchies in medieval Wales has been possible.[89] But one can point to alternative ways of using deeds, and particularly the voluminous ministers' accounts of the crown that detail points of supply for the castles of Wales. There seems to have been no obstacle to supplying Llanbadarn (or Aberystwyth) castle in the west of Wales with wheat, wine, coal and malt simultaneously from towns as far apart as Haverfordwest, Brecon and Hereford between 1298 and 1300.[90]

Medieval Welsh towns should, of course, be studied in their own context, and not judged from the perspective of modern industrial development. Without the emergence of this urban and commercial culture, modern industrial development would have been problematic, to say the least, although this is not to say that the one was inevitably sequential upon the other. One should also not be misled by the relatively small size of the largest towns in Wales compared to those in England, and especially compared to the continental metropolises in the medieval period. As Christopher Dyer states, the later, great industrial centres such as Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham were all medieval small towns, and one can equally point to Swansea and Cardiff in southern Wales.[91] What needs explaining is the relative under-development of towns and manufacturing industry in southern Wales in the early modern period compared to the

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[88] See R. A. Griffiths, 'After Glyn Dŵr: an age of reconcilation', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, *forthcoming*. He shows how integration with the border towns increased with the removal of barriers to Welsh migrants from the 1460s.

[89] See, however, Courtenay, *Medieval and Later Usk*, 111-141.

[90] M. Rhys, *Ministers Accounts for West Wales 1277-1306, Part I* (London, 1936), 135, 149.

[91] C. Dyer, 'Small places with large consequences: the importance of small towns in England, 1000-1540', *Historical Research*, vol. 75, no. 187 (February 2002), 24.

situation in England. It is possible that developing industrial and agrarian specialization in the English regions from the late fifteenth century, and a growing national market centred on London, may have stimulated the reversion to production of raw materials in southern Wales by the second half of the sixteenth century. There is indeed a noticeable influx of Londoners into the land market of southern Wales in the second half of the sixteenth century.[92] In turn, this specialization in southern Wales would have contributed to economic development in England. This would have been facilitated by the increasing dominance of gentry in the commercial centres, a phenomenon that appears to be particularly marked in southern Wales. It is possible that these processes had their roots in the distinctive conditions of early migration and settlement: for example, the necessity for townspeople to have direct access to subsistent agricultural production in territories under military conquest, and for soldier-burgesses to be rewarded with knight's fees in the surrounding countryside.

Detailed research into the towns and their relationships in late medieval southern Wales is therefore potentially of significance, not least, bearing in mind the importance of this region in modern industrial development. It adds to a framework of comparative urban studies in Britain and in Europe generally, and to the debate on the causes of divergent economic developments within pre-industrial Europe.

Spencer Dimmock, December 2002

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[92] For Haverford lordship, see PRO, E210/10210, 10215, 10223, 10233; for Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, see GRO, D/D F.